REMARKS/ARUGMENTS

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 13, 14, 24 and 25 will be canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein, whereby claims 1-9, 13, 14, 24 and 25 will be canceled. Claims 10,15,16, 21 and 22 will be amended. Claims 35-37 will be added.

Applicants have amended claims and have canceled claims merely to expedite the prosecution of this application and preserve the right to contest the rejections set forth against these claims in the Office Action in one or more continuation and/or divisional applications in the event that the rejections are, in fact, repeated therein upon further reconsideration by the Examiner.

Claims 10-12, 15-23 and 26-37 will be pending. Claims 10 and 16 are independent claims.

Claims 10 and 16 have been amended to recite that the antibody comprises a GAH antibody, such as disclosed at beginning at page 9 and the Examples; claims 15 and 16 have been amended to clarify that the polyalkylene glycol and the antibody are separately bonded to the liposome; claim 16 has been clarified to recite that an amount of the bonded compound is 15 to 30 mole% based on one mole of the maleimidated lipid; and claims 21 and 22 have been clarified to recite that each polyethylene glycol group has a molecular weight of 2,000 to 7,000 daltons, or about 5,000 daltons in accordance with Applicants' originally filed disclosure.

Claims 35-37 have been added to recite that the medicament comprises doxorubicin in accordance with Applicants' originally filed disclosure, including the examples therein..

Reconsideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

Discussion Of Personal Interview

Applicants express appreciation for the courtesies extended by the Examiner to Applicants' representative Arnold Turk during a June 2, 2005 personal interview at the Patent and Trademark Office. During the interview, issues raised in the Office Action were discussed. Regarding arguments relating to the disclosure of documents and how such disclosure differs from the claimed invention, the Examiner basically indicated that arguments should be submitted on the record, and he will consider such arguments.

It was argued with respect to Tagawa '221 (U.S. Patent No. 5,264,221) that this document discloses a broad range of 0.3 to 60 mg per 100 mg of lipid, and one example of 5 mg per 100 mg of lipid. It was argued that such disclosure is not of sufficient specificity to arrive at Applicants' recitation in claim 10 of 0.5 to 4.5 mg, or 1.2 to 2 mg in claims 11 and 16. However, the Examiner contended that 5 mg is close to the upper limits recited in Applicants' claims despite arguments that close is not anticipation.

Moreover, with respect to claim 16, it was argued that the claim also recites 15 to 30 mole% of the bonded compound.

Regarding the obviousness rejection based upon Tagawa '221, the Examiner indicated that claims directed to the subject matter disclosed in the examples may show unexpected results for the subject matter therein.

Arguments presented during the interview are included in the remarks herein.

Vacating Of November 1, 2004 Office Action

Applicants express appreciation for the vacating of the November 1, 2004 Office Action, and clarification of the record in the present Office Action including a Form PTO-892 listing newly-cited documents.

Information Disclosure Statements

Applicants note that initialed copies of Forms PTO-1449 are attached to the vacated Office Action, but are not included with the present Office Action. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner include initialed copies of the Forms PTO-1449 submitted on July 15, 2004 and January 12, 2004.

Moreover, it noted that Kirpotin et al, Biochemistry 1997, 36(1), 66-75, is not initialed on the form filed July 15, 2004 that is attached to the vacated Office Action. Therefore, Applicants request that a completely initialed form be included with the next communication.

Claim of Priority

Applicants **once again** note that this application claims priority of Japanese Application Nos. 11-115737, filed April 23, 1999, and 11-115738, filed April 23, 1999. In this regard, Applicants once again note that a copy of the Form PCT/IB/304 was submitted with the papers when entering the national stage. **The Examiner is therefore respectfully requested to acknowledge the claim of foreign priority in the next communication from the Patent and Trademark Office as well as receipt of the certified copies of the priority documents in this national stage application.**

Response To Rejections

The following rejections are set forth in the Office Action:

35 U.S.C. 102/103 Rejections

(a) Claims 10-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C.102(b) as being anticipated by Tagawa, U.S. Patent No. 5,264,221 (Tagawa '221).

(b) Claims 10-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C.103(a) as being unpatentable over Tagawa '221.

(c) Claims 10-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C.103(a) as being unpatentable over Kirpotin et al., Biochemistry, 1997) by itself, or in combination with Tagawa '221.

(d) Claims 10-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C.103(a) as being unpatentable over Tagawa, U.S. Patent No. 5,556,948 (Tagawa '948), or Tagawa, U.S. Patent No. 5,686,101 (Tagawa '101).

(e) Claims 10-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C.103(a) as being unpatentable over Hosakawa, U.S. Patent No. 6,787,153 (Hosakawa '153), or Hosakawa, U.S. Patent No. 6,139,869 (Hosakawa '869).

Obviousness-type Double Patenting Rejections

(f) Claims 10-12, 14-23 and 25-27 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 2-5 of Tagawa '948.

(g) Claims 10-12, 14-23 and 25-27 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 2-5 of Tagawa '101.

(h) Claims 10-12, 14-23 and 25-27 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-20 of Hosakawa '153.

(i) Claims 10-12, 14-23 and 25-34 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-12 of Hosakawa '869.

In response to the rejections set forth in the Office Action, Applicants respectfully submit the rejections are without sufficient basis and do not set forth a prima facie case of unpatentability. However, to advance prosecution of the application, and without expressing any agreement or acquiescence with the rejections of record, Applicants have amended the claims in order to advance prosecution of the application in accordance with the discussion with the Examiner during the above-noted interview. As noted above, Applicants preserve the right to file one or more divisional and/or continuation applications directed to the subject matter prior to the present amendment, and to present arguments for patentability thereof.

Applicants note that independent claim 10 is directed to a liposome comprises an antibody bonded through a thioether group to a liposome comprising lipids whose partial component has maleimidated terminal, and wherein an amount of the bonded antibody is 0.5 to 4.5 mg per 100 mg of total lipids that constitute the liposome, said antibody comprising a GAH antibody. Moreover, Applicants' independent claim 16 is directed to a liposome comprising a bonded compound containing a polyalkylene glycol moiety bound to the liposome through thioether groups and a separately bonded antibody bound to the liposome through thioether groups, said liposome comprising lipids whose partial component has maleimidated terminal, and wherein an amount of the bonded compound is 15 to 30 mole% based on one mole of the maleimidated lipid, and an amount of the bonded antibody is 1.2 to 2 mg per 100 mg of total lipids that constitute the liposome, and said antibody comprising a GAH antibody.

As previously noted by Applicants and as discussed with the Examiner during the above-noted interview, Applicants' specification, beginning at page 1, "Background Art" section, beginning in the second paragraph, discusses and contrasts Japanese Patent Unexamined Publication (Kokai) No. 4-346918 (hereinafter "JP '918") with the invention that is disclosed and claimed in the instant application. The Examiner is reminded that Tagawa '221 is a family member of JP '918, and this family relationship between Tagawa '221 and JP '918 is set forth in the Information Disclosure Statement, filed January 25, 2002. Despite the family relationship that has been presented on the record, the rejection neither indicates such relationship, nor does the rejection address any of the discussion of JP '918 in Applicants' specification.

Still further, it is once again noted that Tagawa '221 includes overlapping inventors with the present application, in that the inventors named in Tagawa '221 include, amongst other co-inventors, Toshiaki Tagawa and Saiko Hosokawa, who are the inventors of the presently claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants have, by the present invention, provided improvements over prior art of which they were co-inventors. Similarly, Hosokawa '869 and Hosokawa '153 include, amongst other co-inventors, Toshiaki Tagawa and Saiko Hosokawa, and Tagawa '948 and Tagawa '101 include, amongst other co-inventors, Toshiaki Tagawa.

Regarding the specific rejections set forth in the Office Action, Applicants note the following regarding deficiencies in the disclosures of the cited documents, whereby Applicants' claims are not anticipated, obvious or properly subjected to an obviousness-type double patenting rejection over the prior art of record.

Tagawa '221

Applicants note that Tagawa '221 discloses the use of a thiolated antibody in a ratio of 0.1 mol% to 20 mol% based on 1 mol of maleimide group (column 4, lines 9 to 7 from the bottom). Also, Tagawa '221 discloses in Example 3, a PEG modified liposome bound with an antibody. As explained in Example 3 of Tagawa '221, the liposome disclosed in Example 3 was prepared according to the method described in Example 2, which means that 100 mg of lipid was used for preparation of the liposome of Example 3. Moreover, in contrast to the liposomes recited in Applicants' claims, Tagawa '221 discloses in Example 2 (at column 7, lines 43-44) the preparation of a liposome by using 5 mg of Fb' antibody for 100 mg of lipids.

Thus, Example 2 of Tagawa '221 discloses the use of 5 mg antibody per 100 mg of lipids. Whilst, the present invention as defined Applicants' claims provided unexpected results, as will be discussed below, so as to achieve remarkable suppressive effect against tumor proliferation and superior retention in blood as compared with the liposome with 5 mg antibody per 100 mg lipids.

As discussed with the Examiner during the above-noted interview, Applicants' originally filed specification, including Example 4, provides evidence of the unexpectedly advantageous results associated with Applicants' invention, In particular, in Example 4 liposomes 2-7 containing varying amounts of GAH antibody (0.5, 1:2, 2.0, 4.5, 5.3 and 11.4 mg) bonded to 100 mg of the total lipids of the liposome encapsulating doxorubicin (DXR, also referred to as adriamycin) were prepared according to the method of Example

1. Also, liposomes 1 bonded with no antibody were prepared. For the Examiner's convenience Table 3 from Applicants' specification including the content of the liposomes in the specification is reproduced below and modified to include conversion to amount of bound PEG (per 1 mol of maleimidated lipids). A discussion regarding the calculations regarding the conversion will be presented following the discussion of Example 4.

Liposome disclosed in Example 4	Amount of bonded antibodies (mg/100 mg lipids)	Amount of included DXR (mg/100 mg lipids)	Amount of bonded PEG (mg/100 mg lipids)	Amount of bound PEG (per 1 mol of maleimidated lipids
1	0	9.5	8.2	28 mol%
2	0.5	9.1	8.2	28 mol%
3	1.2	9.5	8.1	28 mol%
4	2.0	8.9	5.3	18 mol%
5	4.5	9.6	6.2	21 mol%
6	5.3	9.7	6.4	22 mol%
7	11.4	10.0	3.2	11 mol%
Tagawa '221	Fab' antibody 5 mg			47 mol%

Example 4 further notes that retention of each liposome in blood was equivalent within the range of the amount of PEG bonded (> 4.4 mg/100 mg lipids), and Example 4 therefore indicates that the experimental results shown in the examples depended on the bonded amount of antibodies.

In Example 4, stomach cancer cell strain MKN45 was subcutaneously transplanted at two sites on nude mice. For the "efficacy test", administrations of liposomes with different amounts of bonded antibodies were started when the tumor reached to a size large enough to measure its long and short diameters. The dose of the

liposomes was 5.0 mg/kg (as the amount of DXR) per administration, and a DXR-administered group (5.0 mg/kg) was provided as a positive control, and physiological saline was administered to the control group.

Significant inhibitory effects against tumor proliferation were found in all of the treated groups compared with the control group. A review of Fig. 3 in Applicants' application, when comparison is made to the DXR-administered group, reveals significant inhibitory effects against tumor proliferation in the samples with the amounts of bonded antibodies within the range of 0.5 to 5.3 mg/100 mg of total lipids. The inhibitory activity against tumor proliferation was observed with a peak in the vicinity of 2 mg/100 mg of total lipids as the amount of bonded antibodies.

In the "pharmacokinetic test", liposomes 4 to 7 with different amounts of bonded antibodies (2.0, 4.5, 5.3 and 11.4 mg/100 mg of total lipids) were intravenously administered to mice (each group consisted of 2 or 3 mice, 1.0 mg/kg as the amount of DXR amount). Four hours after the administration, blood plasma was collected from each animal. The amount of DXR in plasma was measured by the fluorescence measurement method in the same manner as in Example 2. The amounts of DXR in plasma in the respective samples after the administration were compared to find correlation between the amount of bonded antibodies and the retention in blood of the liposomes encapsulating DXR and bonded with antibodies. In the pharmacokinetic test, correlation between the DXR amount in plasma after administration of each sample and the amount of bonded antibodies of each sample was obtained for samples having the amount of the bonded antibodies of 2 mg/100 mg of lipids or more, as can be seen from a review of

Fig.4 in Applicants' application. As a result, it was found that, when the amount of the bonded antibodies exceeded 2 mg/100 mg of the lipids, the retention in blood decreased depending on the increasing amount of the bonded antibodies.

The conversion to amount of bound PEG (per 1 mol of maleimidate lipids) shown in the Table above can be calculated as follows. For example, liposome 1 shown in Table 3 is indicated to have the bonded PEG of 8.2 mg/100 mg lipids. The PEG used in Example 4 has the molecular weight of 10,000, which will be explained below, and therefore, the bonded PEG is 0.82 μ mol/100 mg lipids. The amount of maleimidated lipid per 100 mg lipids is 2.9 μ mol, which will also be explained below. Accordingly, the amount of bound PEG per 1 mole of maleimidated lipid is calculated as:

0.82 μ mol ÷ 2.9 μ mol x 100(%) = 28 mol%.

The amounts of the bound antibody and the bound PEG in the liposome disclosed in Tagawa '221 are 5 mg/100 mg lipids and 47 mol% per I mol of maleimidated lipids, respectively. It is further noted that the amount of the bound antibody and the bound PEG of the liposomes disclosed in Tagawa '221 are identical to those disclosed in Hosokawa '153 and Hosokawa '889.

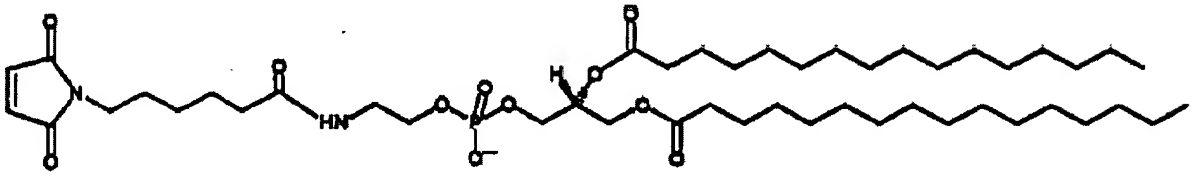
Further, regarding the conversion and as noted above, the liposomes disclosed in Example 4 were prepared according to the method of Example 1, as explained at page 17, line 2 in Applicants' specification. The liposome of Example 1 consisted of a mixture of dipalmitoylphosphatidylcholine (DPPC, M.W. 734, 18 moles), cholesterol (Cho, M.W. 346.7, 10 moles), and ε-maleimidocaproyldipalmitoylphosphatidylethanolamine (MC-DPPE, M.W. 884, 0.5 mol). The content of MC~DPPE in the total lipid can be

calculated as follows:

DPPC	:	Cho	:	MCDPPE
18 mol		10 mol		0.5 mol
18 x 734		10 x 346.7		0.5 x 884
13212(A)		3467(B)		442(C)

A+B+C (g) : C (g) = 100 (mg) : Y(g)
Y(g) = 2.58mg → 2.58mg ÷ 442 = 2.9 μmol

Structure of MC-DPPE (M.W. 884)



With regard to the molecular weights of the PEGs, a two-chain type PEG which is referred to as "PEG 2000" and a two-chain type PEG which is referred to as "PEG 5000" were used in the Examples. Specifically, the explanation of "thiolated PEG (30 mg/mL, a two-chain type PEG having a molecular weight of 2000 (PEG 2000) and a two-chain type PEG having a molecular weight of 5000 (PEG 5000))" is given in Applicants' specification at page 12, lines 3 to 1 from the bottom.

However, Applicants have presently noted that the aforementioned explanation may be ambiguous, which results from a sort of mistranslation and the explanation is not precisely in accordance with that given in the original Japanese language specification in the International Application of which the present application is a national stage application. The explanation is more appropriately translated from the Japanese specification as "thiolated PEG (30 mg/mL, a two-chain type PEG in which each PEG has

a molecular weight of 2000 (PEG 2000) and a two-chain type PEG in which each PEG has a molecular weight of 5000 (PEG 5000))." Accordingly, "PEG 5000" (note that "PEG 5000" is a two-chain type PEG which has two chains of PEG each having a molecular weight of 5000) has a molecular weight of 10,000 as a whole molecule. The specification is being amended herein to clarify the translation.

Attached is a specification for "PEG 5000" which was attached to a product purchased on behalf of Applicants. In this specification, the product was named as "Sun-Bright SHPEG2" by a manufacturer, and as a result of quality test, the product was found to have a molecular weight of 11,000 which is within the standardized range of 10,900 to 13,000 specified by the manufacturer.

Accordingly, unexpected results are shown for the liposome recited in Applicants' independent claim 10 wherein an antibody is bonded through a thioether group to a liposome comprising lipids whose partial component has maleimidated terminal, and wherein an amount of the bonded antibody is 0.5 to 4.5 mg per 100 mg of total lipids that constitute the liposome, said antibody comprising a GAH antibody.

Moreover, unexpected results are shown for the liposome recited in Applicants' independent claim 16 comprising a bonded compound containing a polyalkylene glycol moiety bound to the liposome through thioether groups and a separately bonded antibody bound to the liposome through thioether groups, said liposome comprising lipids whose partial component has maleimidated terminal, and wherein an amount of the bonded compound is 15 to 30 mole% based on one mole of the maleimidated lipid, and an amount of the bonded antibody is 1.2 to 2 mg per 100 mg of total lipids that constitute

the liposome, and said antibody comprising a GAH antibody.

The Examiner points to a broader range disclosed by Tagawa '221 and also contends that 4.5 is close to 5. However, the Examiner is reminded that in accordance with case law such disclosure should not be considered to be anticipation. In this regard, as discussed with the Examiner during the above-noted interview and as stated in MPEP 2131.03, Rev.2, May 2004, II. PRIOR ART WHICH TEACHES A RANGE WITHIN, OVERLAPPING, OR TOUCHING THE CLAIMED RANGE ANTICIPATES IF THE PRIOR ART RANGE DISCLOSES THE CLAIMED RANGE WITH "SUFFICIENT SPECIFICITY", When the prior art discloses a range which touches, overlaps or is within the claimed range, but no specific examples falling within the claimed range are disclosed, a case by case determination must be made as to anticipation. In order to anticipate the claims, the claimed subject matter must be disclosed in the reference with "sufficient specificity to constitute an anticipation under the statute." For example, if the claims are directed to a narrow range, the reference teaches a broad range, and there is evidence of unexpected results within the claimed narrow range, depending on the other facts of the case, it may be reasonable to conclude that the narrow range is not disclosed with "sufficient specificity" to constitute an anticipation of the claims.

In the instant situation, Applicants respectfully submit that there is not sufficient specificity so as to comprise anticipation and the claimed invention is not clearly envisaged in Tagawa '221. This lack of anticipation is also readily evident from the unexpected results. Also, it would not have been obvious to manipulate the amount of antibody or the amount of antibody and polyethylene glycol in Tagawa '221 to arrive at

Applicants' invention, especially in view of the unexpected results associated with Applicants' invention.

Still further, as stated in MPEP 2131.03, Rev.2, May 2004, III. PRIOR ART WHICH TEACHES A VALUE OR RANGE THAT IS VERY CLOSE TO, BUT DOES NOT OVERLAP OR TOUCH, THE CLAIMED RANGE DOES NOT ANTICIPATE THE CLAIMED RANGE, "[A]nticipation under § 102 can be found only when the reference discloses exactly what is claimed and that where there are differences between the reference disclosure and the claim, the rejection must be based on § 103 which takes differences into account." Accordingly, anticipation cannot be present when, in the instant situation, the values to do overlap or touch.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that Tagawa '221 does not teach each and every element as recited in Applicants' claims whereby the anticipation rejection is without appropriate basis. In particular, the obviousness rejection utilizing this same document is evidence of a lack of anticipation because the same claims are separately rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) due to differences between Applicants' claimed invention and the disclosure of Tagawa '221. For example, Applicants once again note that the obviousness rejection specifically states that, "Tagawa's does not teach the entire claimed range of the bonded compound and the bonded antibody."

Expanding upon the above, Applicants emphasize that throughout their originally filed application patentable differences are set forth over the disclosure of Tagawa '221. In this regard, the Examiner's attention is once again directed to Applicants' specification at page 2, first full paragraph wherein the subject matter of Tagawa '221 is contrasted

with reference being made to the 5 mg addition of antibodies as noted above in Example 2 of Tagawa '221.

Moreover, beginning in the next paragraph on page 2 of Applicants' specification and continuing through page 3, the advantages of Applicants' invention are further discussed.

Also, as discussed above, the unexpected advantages of using a smaller amount of bound antibody according to Applicants' invention is also apparent from a review of Applicants' Example 4. As explained in Example 4, a smaller amount of bound antibody gives a higher therapeutic effect, and this result is unexpected by one of ordinary skill in the art in view of Tagawa which discloses the use of a larger amount of bound antibody than the presently claimed liposome, medicament composition and method.

Applicants further submit that the dependent claims are patentable over Tagawa for the reasons set forth above. Moreover, the dependent claims are patentable for the subject matter included therein in combination with their parent claims. For example, claim 11 further patentably defines that an amount of the bonded antibody is 1.2 to 2 mg per 100 mg of total lipids that constitute the liposome.

Still further, with regard to claim 16, the claimed invention relates to liposome modified with the specified amount of the antibody as mentioned above and also modified with a specified amount of polyethylene glycol, i.e., 15 to 30 mole%. Tagawa '221 fails to teach or suggest the claimed range of polyethylene glycol in combination with the specified amount of antibody. The combination of the specific amount of antibody and the specific amount of polyethylene glycol of the liposome of claim 16 would not have

been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, and the advantageous effects of the liposome would also not have been expected by one of ordinary skill in the art.

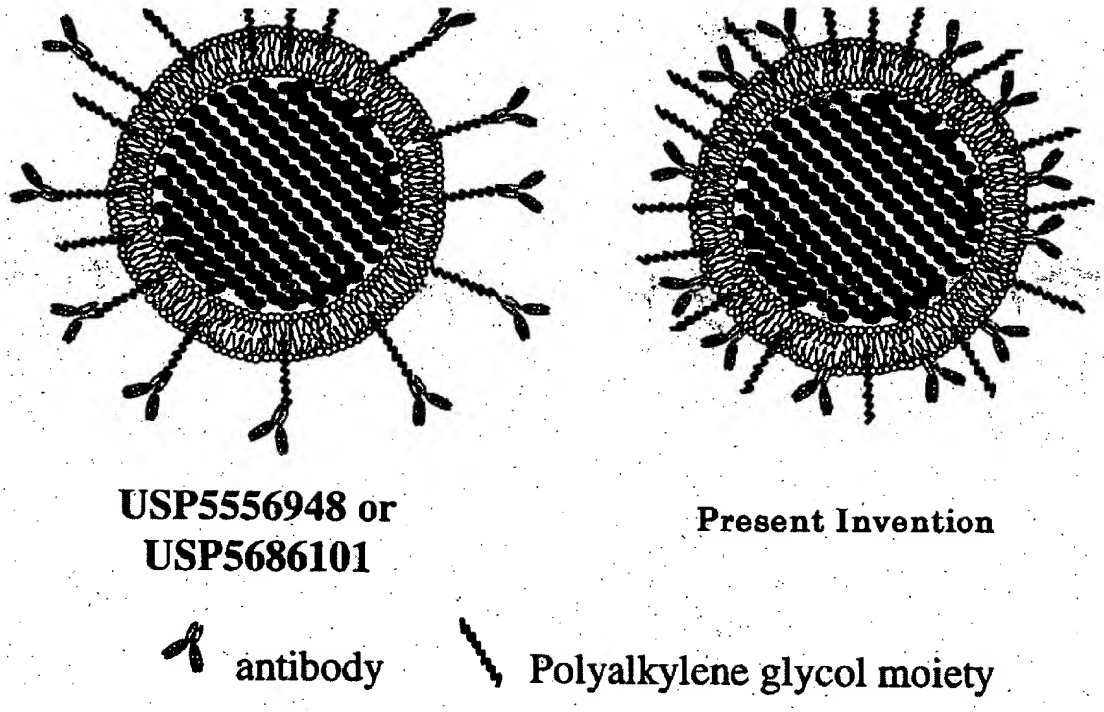
Kipotin does not overcome the deficiencies of Tagawa '221. In this regard, the rejection based upon Kirpotin relies upon Tagawa '221 in an attempt to arrive at Applicants' claims. However, for the reasons set forth above, there is not teaching or suggestion in Tagawa '221 to arrive at Applicants' claims.

Accordingly, the anticipation and obviousness rejections based upon Tagawa '221 should be withdrawn.

Tagawa '948 and Tagawa '101

With regard to rejections utilizing Tagawa '948 or 'Tagawa '101, Applicants respectfully submit that the invention disclosed in Tagawa '948 and Tagawa '101 is directed to a liposome preparation to which an antibody is bound via a polyethylene glycol to have the liposome localize in a specific site by means of a specificity of the antibody. As discussed with the Examiner during the above-noted interview, while the presently claimed invention also relates to a liposome preparation which can be localized in a desired site by using a specificity of an antibody, the presently claimed liposome is structurally distinguishable from the liposome disclosed in Tagawa '948 or Tagawa '101, because the presently claimed liposome is directly bound with an antibody by using the maleimide group introduced in a lipid.

The following illustration shows the structural differences of the liposome disclosed in Tagawa '948 and the liposome of the presently claimed invention.



Accordingly, for at least the reasons noted above, the rejections based upon Tagawa '948 or Tagawa '101 are without appropriate basis and should be withdrawn.

Hosokawa '153 and Hosokawa '869

Hosokawa '153 and Hosokawa '869 disclose the antibody GAH. However, as discussed above, the antibody according to the presently claimed invention as defined in Applicants' independent claim 10 wherein an antibody is bonded through a thioether

group to a liposome comprising lipids whose partial component has maleimidated terminal, and wherein an amount of the bonded antibody is 0.5 to 4.5 mg per 100 mg of total lipids that constitute the liposome, said antibody comprising a GAH antibody; and in Applicants' independent claim 16 as comprising a bonded compound containing a polyalkylene glycol moiety bound to the liposome through thioether groups and a separately bonded antibody bound to the liposome through thioether groups, said liposome comprising lipids whose partial component has maleimidated terminal, and wherein an amount of the bonded compound is 15 to 30 mole% based on one mole of the maleimidated lipid, and an amount of the bonded antibody is 1.2 to 2 mg per 100 mg of total lipids that constitute the liposome, and said antibody comprising a GAH antibody. Still further dependent claim 11 further patentably defines that an amount of the bonded antibody is 1.2 to 2 mg per 100 mg of total lipids that constitute the liposome.

As noted above, the presently claimed liposomes have unexpectedly high suppressive effect against tumor proliferation and superior retention in blood as compared with the liposome with 5 mg antibody per 100 mg lipids disclosed in Tagawa '221. Hosokawa '153 and Hosokawa '869 also disclose the same amount of antibody and the same amount of PEG as Tagawa '221.

Accordingly Hosokawa '153 and Hosokawa '869 do not teach or suggest the subject matter recited by Applicants, and rejections based upon these documents should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections of record, and allow each of the pending claims.

Applicant therefore respectfully requests that an early indication of allowance of the application be indicated by the mailing of the Notices of Allowance and Allowability.

Should the Examiner have any questions regarding this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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